

Application No. 09/931,392
Amendment "E" dated September 17, 2004
Reply to Office Action mailed August 11, 2004

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-23 (Cancelled)

24. (Currently Amended) A multi-part lanyard connector that couples to a lanyard substrate and selectively couples to an attachment to thereby form a lanyard system, the multi-part lanyard connector enabling convenient disengagement at multiple connection points, the lanyard connector comprising:

(A) a lanyard connector body comprising:

a first body portion that is configured to couple to a lanyard substrate, the first portion having a proximal portion and a distal portion, wherein the proximal portion of the first portion is configured to couple to a lanyard substrate; and

a second body portion that is configured to be selectively disengaged from the first body portion, the second body portion having a proximal portion and a distal portion, the proximal portion of the second body portion selectively, nonrotatably coupling to the distal portion of the first body portion; and

(B) a neck extending distally from the distal portion of the ~~first~~second body portion, a distal portion of the neck being configured to be disposed within and coupled to a portion of an attachment to thereby form a lanyard system, such that a user can selectively detach the first body portion from the second body portion and can selectively detach an attachment from the distally extending neck.

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25. (Previously Presented) A lanyard connector as recited in claim 24, wherein the first body portion selectively buckles onto the second body portion.

26. (Currently Amended) A lanyard connector as recited in claim 24, wherein the second body portion comprises a dual male buckle portion that is configured to be selectively disengaged from the first body portion, the dual male buckle portion having: (i) a proximal portion and a distal portion, the proximal portion of the dual male buckle portion comprising a plurality of protuberances that selectively couple to the distal portion of the first body portion; and (ii) a distally extending split neck extending from an opposing side of the dual male buckle portion, the neck being configured to be disposed within and coupled to a portion of the attachment in a snap-fitting, rotating engagement with the attachment~~distal portion of the first body portion comprises a female portion and the proximal portion of the second body portion comprises a male portion, the male portion selectively buckling into the female portion.~~

27. (Previously Presented) A lanyard connector as recited in claim 24, wherein the distally extending neck enables the attachment to rotate about the neck.

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28. **(Currently Amended)** A lanyard connector as recited in claim 24, wherein the second body portion comprises a dual male buckle portion that is configured to be selectively disengaged from the first body portion, the dual male buckle portion having: (i) a proximal portion and a distal portion, the proximal portion of the dual male buckle portion comprising outer protuberances that are sufficiently flexible to selectively couple to the distal portion of the first body portion and an elongate protuberance positioned between the outer protuberances and configured to selectively fit within a mating recess within the first body portion, such that the dual male buckle portion is nonrotatably coupled to the first body portion; and (ii) a distally extending split neck extending from an opposing side of the dual male buckle portion, the neck being configured to be disposed within and coupled to a portion of the attachment in a snap-fitting, rotating engagement with the attachment~~the distally extending neck comprises a split neck.~~

29. **(Previously Presented)** A lanyard connector as recited in claim 24, wherein the distally extending neck comprises a split neck having first and second opposing tapering portions configured such that the tapering portions contact a portion of an attachment when the attachment is mounted thereon.

30. **(Previously Presented)** A lanyard connector as recited in claim 24, wherein the distally extending neck engages the attachment in a snap-fitting relationship.

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31. **(Previously Presented)** A lanyard connector as recited in claim 24, wherein the neck comprises a split neck comprising opposing right and left neck members, each neck member comprising a thinner proximal member and a distal, wider skirt member, wherein the proximal members collectively form a proximal portion having a substantially circular cross section and the skirt members collectively form a skirt portion which tapers proximally, widening as they proceed toward the lanyard connector body.

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32. (Currently Amended) A multi-part lanyard connector that couples to a lanyard substrate and selectively couples to an attachment to thereby form a lanyard system, the multi-part lanyard connector enabling convenient disengagement at multiple connection points, the lanyard connector comprising:

(A) a lanyard connector body comprising:

a first body portion that is configured to couple to a lanyard substrate, the first portion having a proximal portion and a distal portion, wherein the proximal portion of the first portion is configured to couple to a lanyard substrate; and

a second body portion that is configured to be selectively disengaged from the first body portion, the second body portion having a proximal portion and a distal portion, the proximal portion of the second body portion selectively coupling to the distal portion of the first body portion; and

(B) a split neck extending distally from the distal portion of the ~~first~~second body portion, a distal portion of the neck being configured to be selectively disposed within and coupled to a portion of an attachment in a snap-fitting, rotating engagement, to thereby form a lanyard system, the split neck having first and second opposing tapering portions configured such that the tapering portions contact a portion of an attachment when the attachment is mounted thereon, such that a user can selectively detach the first body portion from the second body portion and can selectively detach an attachment from the distally extending neck, wherein the first and second body portions are configured to be nonrotatably coupled.

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33. (Currently Amended) A multi-part lanyard connector that couples to a lanyard substrate and selectively couples to an attachment to thereby form a lanyard system, the multi-part lanyard connector enabling convenient disengagement at multiple connection points, the lanyard connector comprising:

a female buckle portion that is configured to couple to a lanyard substrate, the female buckle portion having a proximal portion and a distal portion, wherein the proximal portion of the female buckle portion is configured to couple to a lanyard substrate;

a dual male buckle portion that is configured to be selectively disengaged from the female buckle portion, the dual male buckle portion having: (i) a proximal portion and a distal portion, the proximal portion of the dual male buckle portion comprising a plurality of protuberances that selectively couple to the distal portion of the female buckle portion; and (ii) a distally extending split neck extending from an opposing side of the dual male buckle portion, the neck being configured to be disposed within and coupled to a portion of an attachment in a snap-fitting, rotating ~~engaging engagement~~ with the attachment,

wherein the neck comprises a split neck comprising opposing right and left neck members, each neck member comprising a thinner proximal member and a distal, wider skirt member, the skirt members tapering and widening proximally,

such that an attachment can be selectively, snap fit onto the split neck in rotating engagement with the split neck and such that a user can selectively detach the male buckle portion from the female buckle portion and can selectively detach an attachment from the distally extending neck,

wherein the proximal portion of the dual male buckle portion is configured to be nonrotatably coupled to the female buckle portion.

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34. **(Previously Presented)** A lanyard connector as recited in claim 33, wherein the male and female buckle portions are configured to be nonrotatably coupled to each other.

35. **(Previously Presented)** A lanyard connector as recited in claim 33, wherein the first and second protuberances each have a proximal end and a distal end, the proximal end of each protuberance entering a respective recess in the female buckle portion when the male buckle portion is coupled to the female buckle portion, and wherein each protuberance includes a distally facing notched portion located between a respective proximal and distal end of each respective protuberance.

36. **(Currently Amended)** A lanyard connector as recited in claim 35, wherein ~~the distal ends of the protuberances extend from opposing right and left proximal surfaces of an elongate member~~ a portion of each protuberance extends out of the female buckle portion when the protuberances are coupled thereto so as to be exposed through a respective recess in the female buckle portion, such that a user can unbuckle the protuberances by pressing inwardly thereon.

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37. (Currently Amended) A lanyard, comprising:

a lanyard substrate; and

a multi-part lanyard connector that couples to the lanyard substrate and selectively couples to an attachment to thereby form a lanyard system, the multi-part lanyard connector enabling convenient disengagement at multiple connection points, the lanyard connector comprising:

(A) a lanyard connector body comprising:

a first body portion coupled to the lanyard substrate, the first portion having a proximal portion and a distal portion, wherein the proximal portion of the first portion couples to the lanyard substrate; and

a second body portion that is configured to be selectively disengaged from the first body portion, the second body portion having a proximal portion and a distal portion, the proximal portion of the second body portion selectively, nonrotatably coupling to the distal portion of the first body portion; and

(B) a neck extending distally from the distal portion of the ~~first~~second body portion, a distal portion of the neck being configured to be disposed within and coupled to a portion of an attachment to thereby form a lanyard system, such that a user can selectively detach the first body portion from the second body portion and can selectively detach an attachment from the distally extending neck.

38. (Previously Presented) A lanyard as recited in claim 37, wherein the neck comprises a split neck.

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39. **(Previously Presented)** A lanyard as recited in claim 37, wherein the distal portion of the first body portion comprises a female portion and the proximal portion of the second body portion comprises a male portion, the male portion selectively buckling into the female portion.

40. **(Previously Presented)** A lanyard as recited in claim 37, wherein the distally extending neck comprises a split neck having first and second opposing tapering portions configured such that the tapering portions contact a portion of an attachment when the attachment is mounted thereon, wherein the distally extending neck engages the attachment in a snap-fitting, rotating relationship.

41. **(Currently Amended)** A lanyard as recited in claim 37, wherein the second body portion comprises a dual male buckle portion that is configured to be selectively disengaged from the first body portion, the dual male buckle portion having: (i) a proximal portion and a distal portion, the proximal portion of the dual male buckle portion comprising a plurality of protuberances that selectively couple to the distal portion of the first body portion; and (ii) a distally extending split neck extending from an opposing side of the dual male buckle portion, the neck being configured to be disposed within and coupled to a portion of the attachment in a snap-fitting, rotating engagement with the attachment~~first body portion selectively buckles onto the second body portion.~~

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42. (Currently Amended) A lanyard as recited in claim 3741, wherein a portion of each protuberance extends out of the first body portion when the protuberances are coupled thereto so as to be exposed through a respective recess in the first body portion, such that a user can unbuckle the protuberances by pressing inwardly thereon~~the distal portion of the first body portion comprises a female portion and the proximal portion of the second body portion comprises a male portion, the male portion selectively buckling into the female portion.~~

43. (Previously Presented) A lanyard as recited in claim 42, wherein the male and female buckle portions are configured to be nonrotatably coupled to each other.

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44. (Currently Amended) A lanyard as recited in claim 37, wherein the proximal portion of the second body portion comprises a plurality of protuberances that selectively couple to the distal portion of the first body portion and the first and second protuberances each have a proximal end and a distal end, the proximal end of each protuberance entering a respective recess in the female-bucklefirst body portion when the male-bucklesecond body portion is coupled to the female-bucklefirst body portion, and wherein each protuberance includes a distally facing notched portion located between a respective proximal and distal end of each respective protuberance.

45. (Currently Amended) A lanyard as recited in claim 37, wherein the second body portion comprises a dual male buckle portion that is configured to be selectively disengaged from the first body portion, the dual male buckle portion having: (i) a proximal portion and a distal portion, the proximal portion of the dual male buckle portion comprising outer protuberances that are sufficiently flexible to selectively couple to the distal portion of the first body portion and an elongate protuberance positioned between the outer protuberances and configured to selectively fit within a mating recess within the first body portion, such that the dual male buckle portion is nonrotatably coupled to the first body portion; and (ii) a distally extending split neck extending from an opposing side of the dual male buckle portion, the neck being configured to be disposed within and coupled to a portion of the attachment in a snap-fitting, rotating engagement with the attachment; distal ends of the protuberances extend from opposing right and left proximal surfaces of the elongate member.